



Washington Secretary of State

CLEARINGHOUSE

ELECTIONS NOTICE

Issue: 0806
October 17, 2008

Service, Overseas, and Out-of-State Voters

The receipt and processing of service and overseas ballots and ballot requests has prompted several questions. For consistency across the state, guidelines for such ballots are listed below. (This information has been updated from Clearinghouse Issue: #0618.)

Applications and Voter Registration

Service, overseas, and out-of-state voters are exempt from the 30 day closure of voter registration files.

Federal Post Card Applications are accepted by mail, fax, and email. The original application is not required when using the FPCA as a request for a ballot only. Faxed or emailed FPCAs must be followed by the original form to be accepted as a voter registration application.

Ballots may also be faxed or emailed to voters. Please include instructions on how to return the voted ballot by mail.

Please note: Military dependents are subject to the same requirements as other citizens. If they reside *inside* the state, they must meet either the 30 day or 15 day voter registration deadlines. If they reside *outside* the state, the guidelines for overseas and out-of-state voters are applicable.

From a Registered Voter

- Service and Overseas: Mail the voter an absentee ballot using service voter envelopes. Ensure the voter will receive an absentee ballot through the next two federal general elections. (Required by HAVA)
- Out-of-state voters: Mail the voter an absentee ballot using regular absentee ballot envelopes.

From a Non-Registered Voter

- Using an FPCA or regular registration form:
 - Register the voter regardless of the time of receipt, including inside of the 30 day close of registration period.

- Mail the voter an absentee ballot. Overseas and service voters receive the prepaid service voter envelopes.
- Ensure service voters will receive an absentee ballot through the next two federal general elections.
- No registration form provided:
 - Temporarily register the voter.
 - If a residence address is provided, send the voter a ballot for the appropriate precinct.
 - If a residence address is not provided, contact the voter for the information when there is enough time to receive a response. If time is short, mark the ballot for special processing upon return. Without a residence address, only county-wide offices and issues may be counted.
 - Overseas and service voters use the prepaid service voter envelopes.
 - Flag the registration for cancellation following the issuance of the thirty day reconciliation report.
- Track the number of ballots sent which meet the criteria above.

Ballots Returned by FAX

- Voted ballots received by fax or email meeting all other requirements (waiver of secrecy, signed oath, postmark, etc.) shall be accepted conditionally. The original ballot must be received prior to certification. If the original is not received, the ballot cannot be counted.
- Both UOCAVA and non-UOCAVA voters may send a voted ballot electronically. The date the voted ballot was returned electronically is considered the date of the postmark. (This process does not provide any extra benefit to a UOCAVA voter because UOCAVA voters are not subject to the Election Day postmark requirement.)

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots (FWAB)

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots are available to service voters when a regular absentee ballot does not arrive in time. It is a generic ballot with spaces for the voter to write in his or her choices.

FWAB from a Registered Voter

- Verify the voter has not already returned another ballot.
- It is not required that the voter has previously requested a regular absentee ballot.
- Credit the voter with voting.
- If possible, flag the record as returning a FWAB.
- Process the ballot.

FWAB from a Non-Registered Voter who DID NOT check the 'I also request voter registration' box

- Process the ballot provided that enough identifying information is available. The ballot may be counted as the signature on the oath constitutes their voter registration. (RCW 29A.40.091) If a residence address was not provided, count only county-wide issues.
- Track the names of applicants and the number of ballots received to ensure against double voting.

From a Non-Registered Voter who DID check the 'I also request voter registration' box

- Register the voter.
- Process the ballot.

Temporary registrations for non-registered voters are only valid through the election for which the ballot was requested. After the election is certified and all reconciliation is finished, be sure to cancel the temporary registration of these voters.

If you have any questions, please contact Miriam Campbell at (360) 902-4165 or mcampbell@secstate.wa.gov.